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Recommendations and standards: Related issues for noting and information

Executive Guide on e-Invoicing (United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business - Cross Industry Invoice)

Summary

This document provides an executive guide to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) Cross Industry Invoice (CII), with a view to helping governments, government agencies, industries and private companies to understand better how this e-Invoicing standard can be used to improve the exchange of data.

The purpose of the United Nations work on e-Invoicing is to provide a generic electronic invoicing standard which covers all potential needs within a commercial transaction. It is useable by any party from any economy in the world through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) website free of charge. If the user community finds business processes or data requirements which have not been included in the initial version, an update may be proposed through UN/CEFACT following its Open Development Process.

This document is submitted to the twenty-fourth UN/CEFACT Plenary for noting.

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I. Introduction

1. Creating a paperless environment for trade must address the need for an electronic version of an invoice. But how to create a standard to dematerialize an invoice? There are multiple sectors that use invoices as part of their core sources of information, from the commercial business transaction, transport, customs clearance, fiscal declarations, banking, insurance, etc. Depending on the type of commodity being traded, different types of information must be present on the invoice; an invoice for automobile parts will be very different from an invoice for milk products, and these will both be different from an invoice for transport services.

2. UN/CEFACT has developed a maximum data-set invoice which covers multiple sectors and multiple types of commodities called a cross-industry invoice (or CII for short). It is unlikely that all the data in the UN/CEFACT CII will be necessary all the time. Most usages will be a subset of the full CII. By creating a standard model with all the potential information, it is easier for parties to identify any possible version of an invoice.

3. The UN/CEFACT CII is part of a group of messages in supply chain procedures called the "Cross-Industry family of deliverables." These are all based on the principle of a maximum data set, are integrated into the Supply Chain Reference Data Model, and are fully interoperable with each other. These include the CI-Cataloguing Process, CI-Ordering Process, CI-Quotation, CI-Delivery Process, CI-Remittance Advice, etc.

II. Applications

4. The UN/CEFACT CII can be used in any sector, for any commodity. It uses the base principles of the Core Component Library, which makes it semantically compatible with all UN/CEFACT work as well as that of the World Customs Organization Data Model and the International Air Transport Association's Cargo-XML, to name just a few.

5. The UN/CEFACT CII was chosen in 2016 as one of two obligatory standards within the European Union (EU) for public procurement. This means that every public agency within the EU, however small, will be obliged to accept this standard for electronic invoicing. The objective is to make e-invoicing the only means of accepting invoices in the future.

III. Benefits

6. Using a standard allows sender and receiver to understand all the data content in the same way, unambiguously. As an invoice is potentially reused for multiple operations (sale, transport, clearance, fiscality, remittance, insurance), many actors will play the role of receiver (very often in different economies) making it important to use an international standard with clear semantic definitions.

7. The UN/CEFACT CII is particularly beneficial to the international trading community as it is available free of charge and it covers all sectors of activity and all potential types of commodities. It is further of interest as it has been chosen as an official standard for all procurement within the European Union.

IV. More information

8. The UN/CEFACT Cross Industry Invoice is available free of charge on the UN/CEFACT web site:

- Cross Industry Invoice Business Requirement Specification: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/uncefact/BRS/BRS_CII_v2.0.6.pdf
- Cross Industry Invoice Requirement Specification Mapping: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/rsm/RSM_CrossIndustryInvoice_v3.0.1.zip
- Cross Industry Invoice XML Schema (version 16B): http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/xml_schemas/D16B_SCRDM__Subset__CII.zip

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Executive Guide on United Nations Codes for Trade and Transport Locations

Summary

This document provides an executive guide to the United Nations Codes for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE), with a view to helping governments, government agencies, industries and private companies to understand better how this codification system can be used to improve the exchange of data.

UN/LOCODE is widely used by the transport industry and by government administrations as well as other by actors. A network of National and Sectoral Focal Points as well as an Advisory Group has been set up to support the maintenance and development of UN/LOCODE. It is one of the most downloaded standards on the UNECE website, all divisions combined.

This document is submitted to the twenty-fourth UN/CEFACT Plenary for noting.

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) identifies locations related to international trade around the world. It is a five-character code where the first two characters represent the International Standards Organization (ISO) country code followed by a three-character code unique within that country. These codes have been maintained and published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) secretariat since 1981. Updates and new entries are published twice yearly (cut off dates for submissions are 30 April and 31 October).

2. In order to ensure the precise identification of national locations, the UNECE relies on a network of national focal points to validate all new entries and update requests before they are published. The national focal points also work with key stakeholders in an Advisory Group in order to propose improvements in processes and maintenance.

3. The basis of UN/LOCODE is UNECE Recommendation 16. The first edition was published in 1980 and has been updated twice since. The first issue of UN/LOCODE had 8000 codes and today has over 100,000 from 249 countries, dependent territories and special areas.

II. Applications

4. UN/LOCODE is widely used by most major shipping companies, freight forwarders, and the maritime and manufacturing industries. It is also used by national Governments, especially by customs and port authorities, and in related activities such as statistics.

5. Each UN/LOCODE entry provides several details, such as the subdivision of the location country code, the function of the location (maritime port, airport, road hub, etc.), an indicative geolocation coordinate, and the status of the entry (if it has been validated by a national administration, an economic operator or other), etc..

III. Benefits

6. By using UN/LOCODE, operators and authorities can unambiguously identify where transport services begin, where goods will enter an economy and where the goods will be cleared—without needing to know national codes or national languages. It is used for goods movements associated with trade and for use in information exchange between participants in international trade.

IV. More information

7. Link to UN/LOCODE page of website (http://www.unece.org/cefact/locode/welcome.html)